BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Water Quality and Quantity

We are fortunate to have a safe and adequate water supply in York Region; however, changes in land use can threaten both water quality and quantity. If large areas are paved over or forest cover is reduced, our water supplies can be affected. Some agricultural and industrial practices also affect water supplies.

Surfaces such as roadways, parking lots and rooftops increase the likelihood of stormwater runoff contaminating lakes and rivers. Contaminants may include: fertilizers and pesticides, oil, grease and toxic chemicals (from roadways and parking lots) and sediment from construction sites. These contaminants pollute the water and require more complex water treatment. Runoff pollution also promotes algae growth and harms fish. We can help protect and conserve this resource for current and future generations through good land use planning.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The York Water System serves approximately 96% of the Region's population. Private wells serve the remainder of the population.
- Approximately 90% of York Region's drinking water comes from Lake Ontario. Lake Simcoe provides 3% and the remaining 7% is from groundwater.
- Inefficient use of treated water requires more energy to treat and distribute additional volumes of water.
- Urban stormwater contributes substantially to the total phosphorus load to Lake Simcoe at approximately 31% by current estimates (LSRCA source).

PUBLIC HEALTH
1-877-464-9675
york.ca/healthybuiltenvironment

19-5254

York Region

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

You make a difference when you. . .

Conserve water:

- Reduce your use of water through water-saving technologies (e.g., rain barrels, low-flow toilets and showerheads)
- Choose landscape features that require little or no watering like a rain garden which can withstand both wet and dry conditions

Don't treat your toilet or drain like a garbage can:

Flushing items that don't belong down your toilets and drains can lead to backups in your homes, clog pipes that take wastewater from your house to our water resource recovery facilities – it can even cause sewage to overflow into our lakes and rivers.

To help:

- Take unused or expired pharmaceuticals and sharps (such as needles) back to your local pharmacy for proper disposal. Most pharmacies will take back unused/expired pharmaceuticals – visit healthsteward.ca to find a pharmacy by address and/or postal code
- Avoid purchasing flushable wipes. If you need to dispose of flushable wipes and personal care products, put them where they belong—in the garbage. In York Region, sanitary products (e.g. pads, tampons, diapers and incontinence products) are accepted in the green bin. Not sure where it goes? The bindicator knows
- Protect your pipes! Fats, oils and grease (FOG) are organic waste and should be placed in your green bin. Before washing pots, pans and dirty dishes, wait for FOG to harden. Wipe with a paper towel or scrape it into the green bin. If FOG is in liquid form, leave it in the pan to cool or pour the liquid into a container such as a tin can or bowl to cool then empty into green bin

Think green: Limit the size of hard surfaces, such as concrete and asphalt, on your property. Instead try permeable pavers which will allow water to seep between the stones. This will help reduce runoff and the potential for flooding.

Dispose of waste properly: Store paint, degreasers, solvents and other hazardous chemicals in a safe place and properly dispose of them at one of York Region's Waste Depots. Visit york.ca/hhw for more details.

Inspect your well and surrounding area annually: to ensure your well is in good condition and free from sources of contamination and test your well water at least three times a year. You can obtain information on how to test your well water at york.ca.

Learn more about your municipality's official plan and how this plan can be used to ensure a safe and sustainable water supply.

Municipalities show leadership when they. . .

- Coordinate water and wastewater services with land use planning approvals
- Make sure new developments have an integrated approach to water management and water conservation. Features of an integrated approach include: use of permeable surfaces, rainwater harvesting, green roofs, water efficient buildings, native vegetation cover, and constructed wetlands
- Protect the quality of drinking water by identifying and mapping municipal wells and intake protection zones
- Reduce the risk to municipal drinking water systems by implementing source protection plan policies
- Develop and implement stormwater management plans, in partnership with stakeholders

BE AN ACTIVE PARTNER WHERE YOU LIVE, LEARN, WORK AND PLAY.

Participate in building healthy communities!